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C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 000647

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/26/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [AS](#)  
SUBJECT: CORRECTED COPY: AUSTRALIA SUPPORTS EXPANDED  
JAPANESE ENGAGEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN

REF: STATE 68003

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor, John W. Crowley for reasons  
1.4 (b) and (d)

CORRECTED COPY: Reasons for Classification Provided.

¶1. (C/NF) Poloff confirmed Australia's support for current and incremental Japanese engagement in Afghanistan in the reftel demarche with Paul Robilliard, Assistant Secretary, Afghanistan and Iraq Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAT). Robilliard stated that the GOA welcomes and supports Japan in taking a more active role in regional security issues, including military and non-military activities in Afghanistan.

¶2. (C/NF) DFAT was already aware of the reftel request, which was delivered by the Pentagon earlier in the week to Steve Merchant, Deputy Secretary Intelligence and Security Group, Australian Defence Force, during his visit to Washington. Robilliard said that Merchant agreed to review the USG points and provide appropriate additional encouragement to the Japanese upon his return to Australia. Robilliard acknowledged that the GOA is sensitive to the GOJ's possible domestic political resistance to providing additional military engagement in Afghanistan.

¶3. (C/NF) Robilliard advised that he had been briefed earlier in the week by the Japanese Embassy on the results of their recent Afghan study of an expanded role. According to Robilliard, the Japanese had examined a wider range of possible contributions than were identified in reftel. He did not comment on whether the Japanese Embassy had indicated a preference. In that meeting, Robilliard advised the Japanese Embassy that FM Smith would welcome existing and additional contributions of engagement at this week's TSD meetings in Japan, if the issue were raised.

¶4. (C/NF) Robilliard volunteered that he had also advised the Japanese Embassy, and reiterated to Poloff, that current GOA policy limits any further contributions by Australia in Afghanistan. He specifically eliminated the possibility of providing additional support in concert with any incremental Japanese activities, as was done in Iraq for Japan's PRT. Robilliard agreed to review the specific additional support as laid out by the USG and to continue discussions with the Japanese following the TSD to encourage their additional engagement in Afghanistan.

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